

## Blinken estimates 1,500 Americans may still await evacuation

By ROBERT BURNS,  
ELLEN KNICKMEYER and  
MATTHEW LEE

Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Wednesday that as many as 1,500 Americans may be awaiting evacuation from Afghanistan, a figure that suggests this part of the U.S.-led airlift could be completed before President Joe Biden's Tuesday deadline. Untold thousands of at-risk Afghans, however, are struggling to get into the Kabul airport. Blinken said the State Department estimates there were about 6,000 Americans who wanted to leave Afghanistan when the airlift

began Aug. 14, and that about 4,500 of them have been evacuated so far. The 6,000 figure is the first public estimate by the State Department of how many Americans were seeking to get out when the Taliban completed its takeover of Afghanistan.

"Some are understandably very scared," Blinken told a State Department news conference.

About 500 Americans have been contacted with instructions on when and how to get to the chaotic Kabul airport to catch evacuation flights.

In addition, 1,000 or perhaps fewer are being contacted to determine



## CHAOS IN KABUL

Secretary of State Antony Blinken speaks about Afghanistan during a media briefing at the State Department, Wednesday, Aug. 25, 2021, in Washington.

Associated Press

whether they still want to leave. Blinken said some of these may already have left the country, some may want to remain and some

may not actually be American citizens. Of the 1,000, the number who are "actively seeking assistance" to leave Af-

ghanistan "is lower — likely significantly lower," Blinken said.

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## Blinken estimates 1,500 Americans may still await evacuation

Continued from Front

The Biden administration has stressed that American evacuees are its first priority, even as it attempts also to airlift Afghans who worked for the U.S. government or military or to build Afghan civil society during the 20-year war as well as what it calls "vulnerable Afghans" — those who believe they face retribution from the Taliban for their role in opposing the insurgency. The Tuesday deadline aside, Blinken said, "There is no deadline on our work to help any remaining Ameri-

can citizens who decide they want to leave to do so, along with the many Afghans who have stood by us over these many years, and want to leave, and have been unable to do so. That effort will continue, every day, past August 31." Biden said Tuesday he has asked his national security team for contingency plans in case he decides to extend the deadline. The U.S. Embassy in Kabul has been evacuated; staff are operating from the Kabul airport and are to leave by Aug. 31. However, refugee groups

are describing a different picture when it comes to many Afghans: a disorganized, barely-there U.S. evacuation effort for Afghan allies that leaves the most desperate to risk beatings and death at Taliban checkpoints. Some Afghans are reported being turned away from the Kabul airport by American forces controlling the gates, despite having approval for flights. "It's 100% up to the Afghans to take these risks and try to fight their way out," said Sunil Varghese, policy director with the Interna-



In this image provided by the U.S. Marine Corps, board a Boeing C-17 Globemaster III, at Hamid Karzai International Airport, Kabul, Afghanistan, Monday, Aug. 23, 2021.

Associated Press

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tional Refugee Assistance Project. "Those with young children and pregnant are willing to take those beatings to get out." His group is one of several working with the U.S. government, and communicating with clients and colleagues on the ground, to get out those Afghans most in danger from the Taliban. Those include Afghans who formerly worked with Americans, as well as journalists, women's rights advocates and others. Just days are left before the U.S. military is to start shutting down its anchoring role in a massive operation that the White House says has evacuated 82,300 Afghans, Americans and other foreigners on a mix of U.S., international and private flights. The withdrawal comes under a 2020 deal negotiated by President Donald Trump with the Taliban. Taliban leaders who took control of Afghanistan this month say they will not tolerate any extensions to the Tuesday deadline. But Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen tweeted that "people with legal documents" will still be able to fly out via commercial flights after Tuesday.

U.S.-based organizations, speaking on background to discuss sensitive matters, cite accounts from witnesses on the ground as saying some American citizens, and family members of Afghans with green cards, still are having trouble pushing and talking their way into the Kabul airport for flights. Kirby said the U.S. military will preserve as much airlift capacity at the airport as possible in the coming days, ahead of Tuesday's deadline. The military will "continue to evacuate needed populations all the way to the end," he said. He added that in the final days and hours there will have to be a balance in getting out evacuees as well as U.S. troops and their equipment. Maj. Gen. Hank Taylor, the deputy director of regional operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said U.S. forces had conducted another helicopter mission beyond the perimeter of the airport to pick up people seeking to evacuate. He said the operation happened in Kabul during the night and that the people were now safely at the airport awaiting an evacuation flight. □



## 2 U.S. lawmakers' Kabul trip prompts questions, condemnation

By LOLITA C. BALDOR and BRIAN SLODYSKO

Associated Press

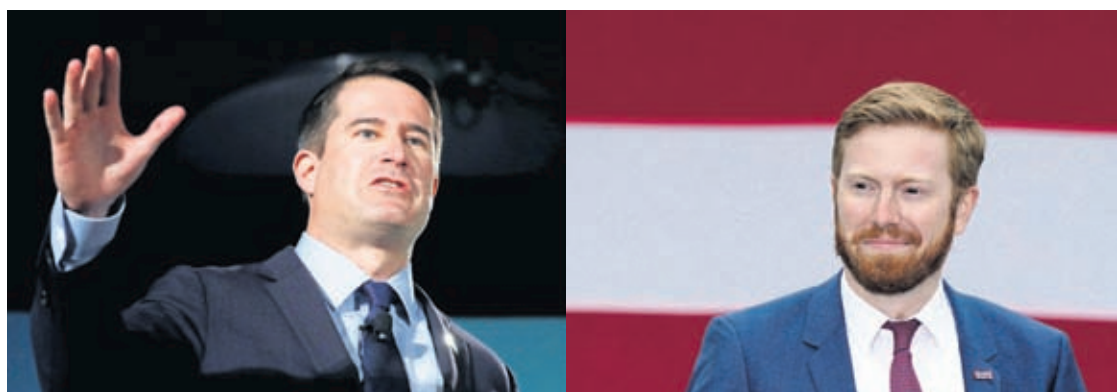
**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Two members of Congress are facing condemnation and questions following their surprise visit to Afghanistan this week, which diverted resources from the U.S.'s chaotic withdrawal, enraged military leaders and led House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to declare it not "a good idea."

Rep. Seth Moulton, D-Mass., and Rep. Peter Meijer, R-Mich., flew in Tuesday and were on the ground at the Kabul airport for several hours before flying out on a military plane.

They billed their "secret" visit as an effort to conduct congressional oversight of the Biden administration's handling of a rapidly deteriorating situation after the Taliban's lightning fast takeover of the country.

But it stunned State Department and U.S. military personnel. They said the resources needed to protect the congressmen detracted from the evacuation effort and raised the possibility that the lawmakers' flight out could have deprived seats to other Americans or Afghans looking to flee the country before President Joe Biden's Aug. 31 deadline for withdrawal.

"We are obviously not encouraging VIP visits to a very tense, dangerous and dynamic situation at



Democratic presidential candidate Rep. Seth Moulton, D-Mass., left, speaks during a candidate forum on labor issues on Aug. 3, 2019, in Las Vegas and Michigan's 3rd District Congressional Republican candidate Peter Meijer, right, speaks at a campaign rally on Oct. 14, 2020, in Grand Rapids, Mich.

that airport and inside Kabul generally," Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said Wednesday, adding, "they certainly took time away from what we had been planning to do that day."

The congressmen now face criticism for showboating as politicians — which they vehemently deny — while adding needless confusion to a dire situation. But they also tapped into a frustration of those who feel that standing by and doing nothing is also not an option. Both are military veterans, with backgrounds in the region. Moulton, a Marine who has been an outspoken critic of the Iraq War, served multiple tours in Iraq. Meijer was deployed as part of the Army Reserves and later worked in Afghanistan at a non-governmental organization providing aid. Moulton serves on the House Armed Services Committee and

Meijer is on the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Their offices did not respond to requests for comment Wednesday. But in a joint statement issued Tuesday night, Moulton and Meijer said they took seats that were already empty on their flight out and disputed suggestions they made the trip to "grandstand."

"We came into this visit wanting, like most veterans, to push the president to extend the August 31st deadline," their statement read "After talking with commanders on the ground and seeing the situation firsthand, it is obvious that because we started the evacuation so late, no matter what we do, we won't get everyone out on time." Back home, however, their effort received a chilly reception.

"This is deadly serious. We do not want members to go," Pelosi said Wednesday,

while warning other lawmakers against following suit. "It was not, in my view, a good idea."

Striking a rare note of agreement, House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy echoed Pelosi, saying his message to other lawmakers who want to visit Afghanistan is "not to go."

Members of Congress who want to take such a trip are required to receive permission from committee chairmen. Moulton did not consult in advance of his trip with the House Armed Services Committee, according to an aide familiar with the situation and granted anonymity to discuss it. McCarthy said Meijer also did not seek permission to go.

Rep. Mike McCaul of Texas, the ranking Republican on the Foreign Affairs Committee, called the trip a distraction, and advised others against making a visit.

"But I understand the frustra-

tion," he said.

Rep. Sara Jacobs, a freshman California Democrat, was less sparing, tweeting, "Taking up space in a disaster zone for your own ego helps no one."

Three officials familiar with the trip said State Department, Defense Department and White House officials were furious because it was done without coordination with diplomats or military commanders directing the evacuation.

The U.S. military found out about the visit as the legislators' aircraft was en route to Kabul, according to the officials. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss ongoing military operations.

One senior U.S. official said the administration saw the visit as manifestly unhelpful, and several other officials said it was viewed as a distraction for troops and commanders at the airport who are waging a race against time to evacuate thousands of Americans, at-risk Afghans and others. The Pentagon has repeatedly expressed concerns about security threats in Kabul, including by the Islamic State group. When members of Congress have routinely gone to war zones over the past two decades, their visits are typically long planned and coordinated with officials on the ground in order to ensure their safety. □

## Biden to tackle cybersecurity with tech, finance leaders

By ERIC TUCKER

Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — President Joe Biden is meeting Wednesday with top executives from some of the country's leading technology companies and financial institutions as the White House urges the private sector to help toughen cybersecurity defenses against increasingly sophisticated attacks.

The summit comes during a relentless stretch of ransomware attacks that

have targeted critical infrastructure, in some cases extorting multi-million-dollar payments from major corporations, as well as other illicit cyber operations that U.S. authorities have linked to foreign hackers.

Though ransomware is one focus of Wednesday's gathering, the purpose of the meeting is broader and centered on identifying the "root causes of malicious cyber activities" and ways in which the pri-

vate sector can help bolster cybersecurity, said a senior administration official who briefed reporters about the gathering on the condition of anonymity.

Among the expected guests at Wednesday's meeting are Apple chief executive Tim Cook, Amazon chief executive Andy Jassy and Sundar Pichai, the CEO of Alphabet Inc., Google's parent company.

The tech industry is also ex-



This Feb 23, 2019, file photo shows the inside of a computer.

Associated Press

pected to be represented by the leaders of IBM, Microsoft and Automatic Data Processing. Besides

Biden, multiple cabinet secretaries and national security officials will represent the administration. □



# Census officials: Fewer gaps in data than initially feared

By **MIKE SCHNEIDER**  
**Associated Press**

The amount of missing information in the 2020 census was less than feared, though it varied by state, the question asked, the type of housing and the mode in which U.S. residents answered the census form, Census Bureau officials said Wednesday. Overall, the percent of U.S. households that didn't provide answers about their age, race and Hispanic background was in the 5% to 6% range, requiring Census Bureau statisticians to fill in the missing details. A half-percent of households didn't even provide a count of how many people lived there.

Counting the characteristics of a neighborhood, city or state correctly in the census is important since it can help determine whether political districts are drawn that allow Black or Hispanic communities to elect representatives that reflect their residents, and it helps direct the allocation of \$1.5 trillion in federal spending annually. While the rates of missing information was higher in the 2020 census than in 2010, it was lower than expected during a once-a-decade head count that was con-



In this Wednesday, April 1, 2020 file photo, People walk past posters encouraging participation in the 2020 Census in Seattle's Capitol Hill neighborhood.

**Associated Press**

sidered the most difficult in recent memory due to the pandemic, natural disasters and attempted political interference by the Trump administration. Around two-thirds of all U.S. households answered the census questionnaire on their own, and those forms had the most complete answers. In about a third of the U.S. households that didn't answer the census form on their own, and required census-taker visits, census takers failed to get an-

swers about the age of residents living there in almost a quarter of those homes, and they failed to get details on race or Hispanic background in about a sixth of those households. When census takers were forced to ask a neighbor or landlord for information because they were unable to reach anyone living in the household, the rate of missing information was 60% for age, 41% for race and 38% for Hispanic origin. "This is not surprising, as

people who don't live at a residence wouldn't be expected to have full knowledge of the demographics, such as age or race, of their neighbors," the Census Bureau said in a statement. States with larger Latino populations had higher rates of residents not answering the question about their race, though the Census Bureau said that had more to do with respondents not identifying with the race categories on the

census form.

Residents living in group housing like nursing homes, college dorms and prisons proved some of the most difficult places to get detailed information since the pandemic sent college students away from campuses and put prisons and nursing homes in lockdowns. The rate of missing information about Hispanic origin was 43% in group housing. It was 30% for race and 17% for age.

To fill in the information holes on census forms, Census Bureau statisticians searched other administrative records such as tax forms, Social Security card applications or previous censuses to find people's race, age, sex and Hispanic background.

The technique has been challenged and upheld in courts after past censuses. In some cases, statisticians looked for information answered about one member of a family, such as race, and applied it to another member that had blank answers.

Or they assigned a sex based on the respondent's first name. In other cases, when the entire household had no information, they filled it in using data of similar neighbors. □

# Conservative hoaxers face \$5.1M fine for election robocalls

By **DAVID EGGERT**  
**Associated Press**

**LANSING, Mich. (AP)** — Two conservative hoaxers face a record \$5.1 million fine for allegedly making illegal robocalls to wireless phones without the owners' consent in the 2020 election. The Federal Communications Commission said Tuesday that the proposed fine for Jacob Wohl, Jack Burkman and Burkman's lobbying firm would be the largest ever for violating the Telephone Consumer Protection Act. The men already face criminal charges in multiple states over allegedly organizing 85,000 robocalls that falsely warned people in predominantly Black areas

of New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Ohio and Michigan that information gleaned from mail-in ballots could lead to their arrest, debt

collection and forced vaccination. The FCC said federal law prohibits making prerecorded calls to cellphones

without the permission of those receiving the calls. The agency, which determined 1,141 calls went to mobile phones on Aug. 26 and Sept. 14, proposed a \$4,500 fine for each one. Regulators launched their investigation following consumer complaints and concerns raised by a national civil rights group, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. The FCC said it worked with the Ohio attorney general's office to obtain subpoenas from two dialing service providers showing emails from Burkman and Wohl, including ZIP codes to target and "the tape we want to go out." They will have an opportunity to respond be-

fore the commission takes action.

In emails to The Associated Press on Wednesday, Wohl and Burkman said the Biden administration is looking to distract from the U.S. pullout of Afghanistan and other woes. "We will not be deterred or discouraged," Wohl said. Burkman called the proposed fine "sad." Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel, whose office is prosecuting the men, said "this massive fine properly reflects the seriousness of the allegations these two political operatives face." The FCC said it was the first time it issued notice of a fine without first issuing a citation, citing a 2019 change in the law. □



In this. Oct. 8, 2020 image from video provided by the 36th District Court in Detroit, Jacob Wohl, left, and Jack Burkman, shown in the center left photo, are seen during an arraignment being conducted over Zoom in Detroit.

**Associated Press**



## Gaza Palestinians resume demonstrations on Israeli border

By WAFA SHURAF

Associated Press

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP)

— Hundreds of Palestinians on Wednesday demonstrated near the Israeli border in the southern Gaza Strip, calling on Israel to ease a crippling blockade days after a similar gathering ended in deadly clashes with the Israeli army.

The demonstration wrapped up without a repeat of Saturday's intense clashes after Hamas kept the crowds from approaching the separation wall.

Egypt, which has been trying to broker a long-term cease-fire between the enemy sides, had appealed to the Islamic militant group to calm things down. Shortly after the demonstration ended, Hamas officials announced that the territory's key border crossing with Egypt was partially reopening on Thursday.

The Israeli military, which had beefed up its forces ahead of the demonstration, said it used tear gas and limited live fire to disperse the crowd. Palestin-



**A masked militant from the Izzedine al-Qassam Brigades, a military wing of Hamas, stands behind a machine gun on a truck as mourners carry the body of Osama Dueij, 32, who was shot in the leg on Saturday during a violent demonstration on the northern border between Gaza and Israel, during his funeral procession in Jebaliya refugee camp, northern Gaza Strip, Wednesday, Aug. 25, 2021.**

ian medics reported at least 14 people were wounded, including five people who suffered gunshots. None of the injuries were believed to be life-threatening.

Soheil al-Hendi, a Hamas official, said the group had made a "great effort" to avoid bloodshed.

"The enemy must understand this message that we do not want to repeat what happened last Saturday when blood was spilled," he said.

Hamas' Al-Aqsa TV showed crowds of people approaching the fence, then running away when an

Israeli military vehicle arrived. Tear gas could be seen floating in the wind. The military said it had used .22 caliber gunfire, a type of weapon that is meant to be less lethal than more powerful firearms but can still be deadly.

During Saturday's demon-

stration, hundreds of participants stormed the fence, some of them throwing explosives, resulting in violent clashes.

An Israeli soldier was critically wounded when a Palestinian militant shot him in the head through a hole in the wall at point-blank range, while over 40 Palestinians were wounded by Israeli fire.

One of the wounded, Osama Dueji, died of his wounds Wednesday. Hamas identified him as a member of its armed wing. Lt. Col. Amnon Shefler, an Israeli military spokesman, said that demonstrators on Saturday fired weapons and lobbed explosives at soldiers and tried to tear down the fence.

"They are presenting riots as peaceful," he said. "In reality, these riots are extremely violent."

He declined to say how many troops had been mobilized on Wednesday but said the number was much larger than on Saturday and included riot-control forces. □

Associated Press

## Spain wrangles with migrant laws as border pressure persists

**MADRID (AP)** — A group of at least 40 migrants attempted to swim from Morocco into Spain's North African enclave of Ceuta and threw stones at Spanish police, local media reported as top officials wrestled Wednesday with what to do with hundreds of unaccompanied minors who got into Ceuta from Morocco three months ago.

Migrants trying to reach European soil swam around a fenced breakwater after nightfall Tuesday and confronted Spanish police officers, one of whom was slightly injured by a stone, local media reported.

Attempts to enter Ceuta by people from sub-Saharan Africa are not uncommon and have led to tension between Spain and Morocco over whether the government in Rabat is doing enough on its side of the border to stop them.

Both countries police a

wide buffer zone around the fenced breakwater. Cooperation with Morocco is crucial for Spanish authorities trying to hold back large numbers of migrants who mass at the border and look for chances to get across. Spain is also under pressure from migrants trying to reach its Canary

Islands by boat from northwestern Africa.

Some 10,000 migrants descended on Ceuta in May by either scaling the border fence or swimming around it. Among them were hundreds of unaccompanied minors, who have been in Ceuta since then.

The head of the Ceuta re-

gional government, Juan Jesús Vivas, said Wednesday the children are living in "inappropriate conditions," with most housed in temporary installations but some sleeping in the street. Officials in Ceuta, which covers about 18 square kilometers (7 square miles) and has a population of around 85,000, say they can't cope with a large number of migrants who enter without authorization. "The situation in Ceuta is truly unsustainable," Vivas said during a news conference, referring to the migrant pressure on the enclave. He said Ceuta felt like it was "at the edge of an abyss" and needs "immediate solutions."

Earlier this month, Spanish authorities began sending the minors back to Morocco, triggering an outcry from migrant rights associations that argued the returns were illegal because

they were done in groups, without prior warning and without a hearing or the provision of legal counsel.

A Spanish court suspended the practice pending legal arguments by the government, which insisted the children were sent back under a 2007 agreement with Morocco for assisted returns once minors' cases are considered.

But a court on Tuesday kept the prohibition in place, leaving officials uncertain about how to proceed.

Vivas, the Ceuta chief, met Wednesday in Madrid with Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez in an effort to find a legal solution to the stalemate.

He said Sánchez gave him assurances that the government will employ all its legal resources to ensure the minors are returned to Morocco. Vivas said no other possible solution is on the table. □



**In this May 19, 2021 file photo, migrants are surrounded by Spanish security forces on a beach after arriving at the Spanish enclave of Ceuta, near the border of Morocco and Spain.**

Associated Press



# Video sparks arrest of Thai police in drug suspect's death

By **CHALIDA EKVITTHAY-AVECHNUKUL**

**Associated Press**

**BANGKOK (AP)** — Four Thai police officers charged with murder in connection with the deadly shakedown of a suspected drug dealer in custody were arrested Wednesday after a video clip of the incident shared on social media caused a public furor.

Three other officers were still being sought in connection with the Aug. 5 incident at their police station in the province of Nakhon Sawan, north of Bangkok, said police Col. Kissana Phathana-charoen, deputy national police spokesman. They include a police colonel with the nickname "Jo Ferrari" because of his collection of expensive sports cars, Thai media reported.

Allegations of police brutality and corruption are not rare in Thailand, but the leaked video showing the suspected drug dealer suffocating after officers placed plastic bags over his head in an alleged extortion effort and an initial dilatory investigation stoked outrage.

Police have also come under harsh criticism recently for their use of force in trying to quell anti-government street protests in Bangkok. While some demonstrators



**Four police officers wanted in connection with the murder of a suspect in their custody arrive at the Nakhon Sawan police station for interrogations in Nakhon Sawan province, Thailand, Wednesday, Aug. 25, 2021.**

employ violent tactics, police have been accused of overreacting and using dangerous methods of crowd control, including firing rubber bullets at close range. "This case of police torture and murder is shocking. But this is not the first case and it is unlikely to be the last case until and unless the police conduct serious interrogations and investigations and leave no stones unturned," said Sunai Phasuk, a senior researcher for Human Rights

Watch. Police started investigating the case only after a well-known lawyer, Decha Kittiwittayanan, published an account of it on his Facebook page. Decha said he had received a complaint from a junior policeman in Nakhon Sawan who said that police had arrested two drug suspects, a 24-year-old man and his female companion, with over 100,000 methamphetamine tablets. The policemen first demanded 1 million baht

(\$30,560) from the suspects, which they agreed to pay for their release, according to the account. But the senior officer at the scene, police Col. Thitisan Uttanapol, demanded double that amount and ordered his subordinates to cover the male suspect's head with a plastic bag and beat him until he agreed, said the junior policeman, whose name was not revealed.

When the suspect died, Thitisan allegedly ordered his

men to take the body to the hospital and tell the doctor the death was caused by a drug overdose. The junior policeman said the woman was released but told not to say anything about it, and that Thitisan paid the victim's father to remain silent.

The initial police response to the furor over the story posted by the lawyer was to transfer Thitisan to another post.

On Tuesday, however, a video clip of the incident was shared on the Facebook page of another lawyer, Sittra Biabanggerd, who said he had received it from a police officer at the Nakhon Sawan station. It shows the male suspect in handcuffs being led into a room, his head covered with a black plastic bag. He is then assaulted and thrown to the floor by officers who put more bags on his head. One of them appears to briefly kneel on him. The man, identified by Thai media as Jeerapong Thanapat, then goes limp. Police try in vain to revive him with a jug of water and CPR.

"We are proceeding with this case, pursuing both criminal cases and disciplinary action," police spokesman Kissana said Wednesday. □

**Associated Press**

## China accuses U.S. of politicizing COVID-19 origins research

By **KEN MORITSUGU**

**Associated Press**

**BEIJING (AP)** — China went on the offensive Wednesday ahead of the release of a U.S. intelligence report on the origins of the coronavirus, bringing out a senior official to accuse the United States of politicizing the issue by seeking to blame China.

Fu Cong, a Foreign Ministry director general, said at a briefing for foreign journalists that "scapegoating China cannot whitewash the U.S."

"If they want to baselessly accuse China, they better be prepared to accept the counterattack from China," he said.

China, the U.S. and the

World Health Organization are entangled in a feud that centers on whether the virus that causes COVID-19 could have leaked from a lab in the city of Wuhan, where the disease was first detected in late 2019.

A joint WHO-China report earlier this year concluded that a lab leak was "extremely unlikely," and China wants the investigation to move on to other possibilities. The most likely scenario, the report said, is that the virus jumped from bats to another animal that then infected humans.

But the findings are not conclusive, and WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in late March that "all hypotheses

are on the table and warrant complete and further studies."

U.S. President Joe Biden ordered a 90-day review by intelligence agencies of both theories. White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said Monday that an unclassified version of the report was expected to be released within "several days." China has responded to continuing speculation about a leak from the Wuhan Institute of Virology by suggesting the virus could have escaped from Fort Detrick, a U.S. military lab in Maryland.

Fu, who heads the Foreign Ministry's Arms Control Department, denied that China is engaging in a disinfor-



**Fu Cong, a Foreign Ministry director general, speaks at a briefing for foreign journalists at the Foreign Ministry in Beijing, China, Wednesday, Aug. 25, 2021.**

**Associated Press**

mation campaign. He said that if other parties insist on pursuing the lab leak theory, then the WHO team of researchers

should visit Fort Detrick. He portrayed it as a fairness issue, since the WHO has been to the Wuhan institute twice. □



# Cleanup begins of Haiti town's earthquake-crumbled homes

By CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN  
and EVENS MARY  
Associated Press

**MANICHE, Haiti (AP)** — At the edge of a pile of rubble, Michael Jules plunged an iron bar over and over into the crumbling concrete of his grandmother's home. A younger cousin squatted at his feet, pulling away debris with a trowel.

It was Jules' third day working the spot like an archaeologist, removing layer upon layer of rock. He had established more or less the perimeter of his room. On Tuesday morning he uncovered a corner of his mattress.

While Jules, 21, toiled with hand tools, and at times his bare hands, just down the street heavy-duty earthmovers cleared lots, depositing entire homes into dump trucks or scraping collapsed dwellings into neat piles. For some victims of Haiti's Aug. 14 earthquake, the necessary prelude to rebuilding has begun.

Joseph Gervain, another of Jules' cousins, watched from the street. He lived in a



Michael Jules, an America des Cayes professional soccer player, searches for his passport among the remains of his grandmother's collapsed house, in Maniche, Haiti, Tuesday, Aug. 24, 2021, a week after a 7.2 magnitude earthquake hit the area.

Associated Press

house behind that was also damaged. He wondered how the earthmovers decide which lots to clear and which to pass.

"I see people removing debris, but I don't know what the conditions are," Gervain said. "Maybe they pay to have the debris

removed. I see they skip houses. Someone is giving orders about which house to remove debris from."

The machines bore the logos of nongovernmental organizations, but who they helped appeared to be guided by Maniche's mayor.

Jean Favard watched one of the large yellow machines push away the rubble of his vacation home just up the street from Jules' grandmother's house. No one had been living at Favard's home and he said he planned to rebuild once it was cleared.

Meanwhile, Gervain said he had no idea what his family would do on the lot where a two-story house with eight bedrooms home to 12 people had been reduced to a one-story pile of concrete and twisted rebar.

Jules kept digging. His goal was twofold: his clothes he was wearing only borrowed Spider-Man boxers and his passport.

"I have not found anything yet," Jules said.

Maniche is a teeth-rattling hour's drive from paved road, over a mountain pass and settled in a wide, green valley. The town lost 80% to 90% of its homes, according to preliminary estimates.

Relatively undisturbed appeared to be Maniche's riverside market. Even on a Tuesday market day is Saturday farmers from surrounding areas crossed the river carrying sacks of beans and peanuts atop their heads. Mules splashed through the water, their woven panniers laden with heavy bunches of plantains. □

## Morocco 'regrets' Algeria's decision to cut diplomatic ties

**RABAT, Morocco (AP)** — Morocco regrets the "completely unjustified" decision of neighboring Algeria to break off diplomatic relations, the country's Foreign Affairs Ministry said Wednesday, calling some of Algeria's reasons "absurd." Algeria cited a

series of alleged hostile acts for the cutting of ties when it announced the decision on Tuesday. The move was "expected... in view of the logic of escalation observed in recent weeks," the Moroccan ministry said in a statement released overnight.

"Morocco categorically rejects the fallacious, even absurd, pretexts underlying it," the statement read.

Morocco and Algeria are allies of Western nations, and their break in relations could complicate diplomacy in the region and beyond. The two countries are important in the fight against extremism in the nearby Sahel region.

France, once the colonial power in both Algeria and Morocco, chose a balanced tone to offend neither side. "Algeria and Morocco are two friends and two essential partners of France," the French Foreign Ministry said. "France remains naturally attached to deepening ties and dialogue between nations of the region to consolidate stability and prosperity." □



Algerian Foreign Minister Ramtane Lamamra gestures as he reads a statement from the country's president in Algiers, Tuesday, Aug. 24, 2021.

Associated Press

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## SVT Women Aruba has a successful start

**SAVANETA** — Last Monday, the Social Training Trajectory (SVT) for women started at Marine Barracks Savaneta (Aruba). There are 14 ladies who will receive professional guidance in the coming year from executives of the Aruban Militia (ARUMIL) and social work. The aim of this is to give young people more opportunities on the labor market.



In the coming phase, which will last four months, various military skills will be taught such as drill, ranks and positions, but also map reading. The emphasis is also on, among other things, discipline, cooperation and a sense of responsibility. After this phase, an internship takes place outside the barracks gates, but they will come back once a week to carry out assignments or to evaluate.

### Gaining experience

Because it is the first time that women participate, it has been decided to keep

the group smaller than usual. In addition, two female instructors have been appointed and trained to provide a familiar learning environment for the students. Minister of Social Affairs and Labour, Mr. Glenbert Croes, wished the women every success in the training. "I actually compare it to a tree that threatens to grow crooked. You can prevent this in time. If you are not there in time to let the young people choose a good path, then such a crooked tree can become. We can really do something for them. The Social Education Program is here to stay."

The SVT is given twice a year and is a collaboration of, among others, the country of Aruba and the Ministry of Defense. In Curaçao, a covenant was recently signed by Prime Minister Gilmar Pisas (also Minister of Justice), Minister Ruthmilda Cecilia-Larmonie of Social Development, Labor and Welfare, Minister Sithree van Heydoorn of Education, Science, Culture and Sport and the Commander of the Navy in the Caribbean, Brigadier General of the Marines Frank Boots. Both men and women can participate in this course. □

## University of Aruba sustainability consultancy handed over to Airport



**ORANJESTAD** — Students of the University of Aruba engineering program called Sustainable Island Solutions (SISSTEM) conducted a sustainability consultancy that supports the Aruba Airport Authority NV (AAA) in achieving short and long term sustainability progress. The reports of this research were handed over by Alba de Agustin and Eric Mijts of the University of Aruba to airport CEO Joost Meijs in the presence of several representatives of the airport's management and sustainability teams.

On the basis of a structured approach, including technical measurements,

literature study, document analysis and interviews, the students formulated recommendations for CO2 reduction and social interventions that align with the airport's sustainability agenda.

The airport will implement multiple recommendations from the technical reports and management summaries and will further engage the students from the university in this process. This collaboration between university and industry has given the students the opportunity to implement the knowledge that they acquired in their study for Aruba's sustainable development. □

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## Flora & Fauna



**SANTA CRUZ** — Saliñas have a crucial ecological function as an essential part of our watershed

Aruba is one of the driest islands in the Caribbean but can experience extremely heavy rainfall during the rainy season. Flooding is naturally prevented by an intricate system of rooi (seasonal riverbeds) that canalize the water run-off to lower laying saliñas (mudflats). Although saliñas are often erroneously considered worthless as being 'just a place of mud' which is sometimes flooded, they are in fact either tidal areas or form part of fresh or brackish water lagoons and wetland systems. Saliñas are extremely productive areas for invertebrates (worms, clams, and other shellfish), attracting an array of wildlife, including (migratory) birdlife, that depend on this source of nutrients and refuge. □

Source: Aruba National Park Foundation



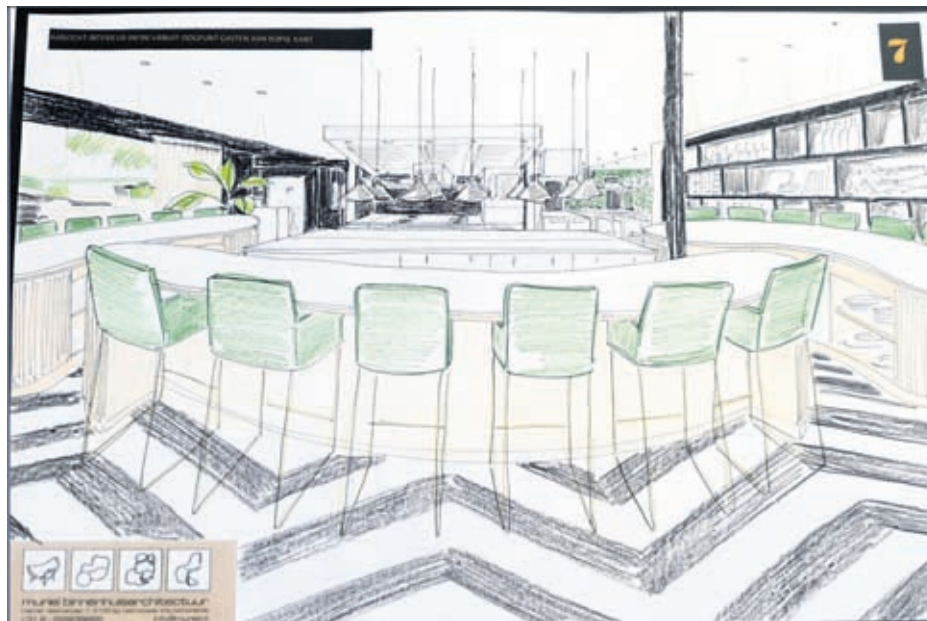
## New beginnings after the kitchen table and beyond with new restaurant: Infini by Chef Urvin Croes

**PALM BEACH** — After spearheading The Kitchen Table for five years, receiving notable recognitions in USA Today, The Daily Meal and earning the #1 spot on Tripadvisor's list of Fine Dining Restaurants in the Caribbean, Chef Urvin Croes has now moved on to higher heights. Infini, his new chef's table, which opened at the Blue Residences in November 2020, allows the Michelin-trained Aruban culinary artist to create gastronomic experiences unconfined by cultural or regional expectations. The former The Kitchen Table space has since been renovated into a suitable culinary studio to host this vision. In describing these changes, Croes says: "We opened up the entire kitchen and elevated the dining tables so guests have a front row stadium-like view of each step of the preparations. The spotlights, which we carefully choreograph, follow the plates' transition from blank canvas into culinary works of art."

### "It is a flavor that you cannot define, but you can create."

He had been sitting on the first menu for over a year. Inspired by umami, one of the five basic tastes, and also Japanese for "essence of deliciousness", Chef Croes strived to organically produce this palate in each dish of the eight-course Chef's Impression. "It is a flavor that you cannot define, but you can create. Take our popular langoustine for example; we combined elements that are rarely paired together: the bitter, sour and salty flavors of the lemon cream, kombucha, green grapes, watercress and achiote, fused with the sweet and delicate taste of the langoustine induce ultimate umami."

After hosting the first menu for three months, the Executive Chef introduced a second tour de force in February 2021 — this time a pes-



catarian menu dedicated to Lent, of which Croes has to say: "I wanted to focus on the finest fish in the world, they are the protagonists of this season." Visitors can experience the second Chef's Impression until May 2021, at which point Croes and his team will reveal exciting new flavors for the summer.

### "Without a great team, there is no great chef"

"There is very little I can do by myself. Without a great team, there is no great chef", says Croes, while raving about the six young professionals sharing his kitchen. All graduates of Aruba's EPI College and familiar faces to the Chef as each one has completed their culinary internship under his guidance. In fact, Infini's Chef de Cuisine, Ashwin Maduro, was Urvin's very first student, before relocating to Amsterdam, where he worked at several Michelin-starred restaurants, including &moshik (formally &Samhoud Places). Having recently re-



turned to Aruba, Chef Maduro is thrilled to be reunited with his first mentor and hopes to secure Aruba's space on the global map of unique culinary experiences. Similarly, after four years working in the two-Michelin starred restaurant Spectrum, Chef de Partie Moises Ramirez returned home to share his vast experience in formulating recipes with meticulous attention to detail and consistency. Further down the kitchen line, Chef de Partie Alvaro Yi, who has worked at the two-Michelin starred FG Restaurant, is all about expressing himself through cooking and plating to create art that you can eat. Mixologist Marc-Anthony Rannis brings eight years of experience in the fine dining industry to Infini. His fine craftsmanship is displayed in the unparalleled wine pairings and signature cocktails, which include his personally homemade syrups, garnishes and fresh local ingredients. Maître D' and Junior Sommelier Jessica Theysen, who previously



managed renowned Chef Dennis Huwaë's Restaurant Daalder in Amsterdam, is a true storyteller. From the moment she serves the Salinity welcome drink and the culinary tale begins, she takes you on an adventure around the world to discover never-before-tasted combinations. Then, towards the end of the night, it is his time to shine — Pastry Chef Jean-Claude Werleman, that is. After spending the last two years perfecting his recipes in the Pastry Department of the Ritz Carlton Aruba, Werleman joins Infini to continue exploring his passion for experimenting with colors and bold flavors.

### "It's time to show that Aruba is a culinary destination of its own"

"The goal is to leave our visitors speechless. The look on their faces whenever they take the first bite says it all and it is priceless", shares Croes, with a smile. Reclaiming the spot of number one restaurant in the Caribbean is also in sight, but this time he will not stop there. "In the end, we want Aruba to be recognized for its culinary mastery. We have trained the best culinary artists right here on the island and they have proven themselves internationally in the most renowned kitchens in the world. Now it is time to show that Aruba is a culinary destination of its own. Who knows where that will take us; hopefully to infinity and beyond."

Infini located at Blue Residences currently serves an eight-course Chef's Impression to up to 21 guests starting at 6:30PM. To make reservations visit [www.infiniaruba.com](http://www.infiniaruba.com) or call +297-699-3982. □



infini  
by Urvin Croes





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## Attractions and Sightseeing locations in Aruba

**ORANJESTAD** — There are enough sight-seeing locations on the island to fill up a month-long vacation. Aruba's beaches are a big attraction, and although it's great to spend long days just relaxing on the beach and listening to the ocean, there are also plenty of opportunities to get to know Aruba's most attractive sights, historical and natural attractions, and museums. Check out these attractions you don't want to miss!



### Blue Horses in Downtown, Oranjestad

This series of 8 sculptures were created by native Aruban artist Osaira Muyale. She named the project Paarden Baai, which translates to "Horse Bay". The statues were installed in 2015 and pay homage to the rich history of Aruba's horse trading industry. In the 17th Century Aruba was used by many countries (Europe, South America, Caribbean islands, and the Mediterranean) as a trading post. The most popular being cattle and horse trading. Horses were once the most important sources of livelihood for Aruba. For 4 centuries the horse and cattle trade ran strong. At any given time Aruba was home to herds of thousands of horses that roamed the island. Aruba being the perfect trading post encouraged an extremely diverse culture and is the reason almost all Arubans speak more than 1 or 2 languages.

Each of the 8 bright royal blue horses is unique and carries its own name and personality. Pictured above is the mare Sinforsosa, but you can also find Saturnina, Escapia, Rosalina, Eufrosina, Ambrosio, Bonifacia, and Celestina. The sculptures embody strength, nobility, grace, beauty and freedom. They represent the historical moment where the horses jumped from the ship decks into the Caribbean and swam to the Aruban Bay. When you visit Aruba be sure to explore downtown Oranjestad and try to find all 8!

### The Lourdes Grotto

Named in commemoration of the famous French religious landmark, was created under the guidance of a priest named "Erkamp" and parishioners in the year 1958. The grotto, a shrine built into the rocks is located in Seroe Preto, just off the main road to San Nicolas. A statue of the Virgin Mary, weighing 700



kilos, was hoisted into place in the grotto. Every year, on February 11 (feast of Lady of Lourdes), a procession leaves from the St. Theresita church in San Nicolas to the grotto, where a mass is performed. The grotto is located road-side and can be visited daily. Just make sure you park safely in the event you wish to stop for pictures at this location.



### Bubali Bird Sanctuary

Watch more than 80 species of migratory birds from the Bubali watch tower, overlooking their resting and breeding area. The observation tower allows birdwatchers to get a true birds' eye view. Migratory birds, looking for lush vegetation in which to nest, find an oasis within the Bubali Bird Sanctuary. The nearby water treatment facility empties into two inter-connected man-made bird ponds. Birds that inhabit the sanctuary include herons, egrets, gulls, skimmers, coots, ducks and more. Located within walking distance of the Palm Beach resorts, the Bubali Bird Sanctuary offers some unique bird watching opportunities. You can't miss it as it is located just in front of the historical Old Dutch Windmill. Make sure to bring your camera as many of these birds will randomly fly by the observation tower giving a little show. This is a great place to bring kids for a unique and possibly once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be so close to the untamed.

**The happiest island in the Caribbean is so much more than just sun, sand and sea.**



# Asian, Black Americans more likely to give to racial justice

By **HALELUYA HADERO**

AP Business Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Donations to racial and social justice causes ticked up to 16% of American households in 2020, as donors raced to provide support to affected communities in a year marked by protests and increased attention on racism in America, according to a report released Wednesday.

The study by Indiana University's Lilly School of Philanthropy found the bump in giving was driven by contributions among all demographic groups, though it noted Asian American and Black households were more likely to donate to such causes than their white counterparts.

Nearly a third of Asian American households and 19% of Black households donated to those causes, according to the study, which found 14% of Hispanic households and 13% of white households made similar donations.

"A lot of the attention, so far, on giving to racial, social justice has been on foundations and the corporate side, but it's also im-



In this March 19, 2021, file photo, members of the Korean American Federation of Los Angeles drive with signs reading: "#Stop Asian Hate," in a caravan around Koreatown to denounce hate against the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

portant to realize that everyday donors households of all different backgrounds have been part of this," said Una Osili, a researcher on the study and the associate dean for research and international programs at the Lilly School.

"It's a very diverse group of donors, and donors of color are certainly leading in giving to racial and social jus-

tice," she said.

The report offers the first major look into how everyday Americans opened their pocketbooks in reaction to last year's summer protests and other events. Experts note many Asian Americans became more mobilized to donate amid fears about anti-Asian discrimination during the COVID-19 pandemic. The slay-

ings of six women of Asian descent earlier this year also brought a new wave of donations amid widespread concerns about the spike in anti-Asian hate crimes across the U.S.

"It is a new moment in this country, and the world, around racial reckoning and Asian Americans are actually a part of that," said Patricia Eng, the president

of the advocacy organization Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy. Millions have poured into organizations focusing on Asian American communities, though, researchers say the donations cut across racial lines.

A large chunk of the study's findings comes from a national representative survey of more than 1,500 households, which was conducted with the research organization NORC at the University of Chicago. But the data also has its limits -- the survey was conducted in September 2020, months before the year ended.

Contributions to racial justice causes could go to different sectors, including education, the environment and civil rights. The Lilly study found donors to these causes were more likely to be younger, single and less religious than other donors. Researchers say that's partly because donations have largely been driven by social media, which tends to draw in younger Americans, who also participate less in religious services. □

# Delta will charge unvaccinated employees \$200 per month

By **DAVID KOENIG**

AP Airlines Writer

Delta Air Lines will charge employees on the company health plan \$200 a month if they fail to get vaccinated against COVID-19, a policy the airline's top executive says is necessary because the average hospital stay for the virus costs the airline \$40,000.

CEO Ed Bastian said that all employees who have been hospitalized for the virus in recent weeks were not fully vaccinated.

The airline said Wednesday that it also will stop extending pay protection to unvaccinated workers who contract COVID-19 on Sept. 30, and will require unvaccinated workers to be tested weekly beginning Sept. 12, although Delta will cover the cost. They will have to wear masks in all in-

door company settings. Delta stopped short of matching United Airlines, which will require employees to be vaccinated starting Sept. 27 or face termination. However, the \$200 monthly surcharge, which starts in November, may have the same effect.

"This surcharge will be necessary to address the finan-

cial risk the decision to not vaccinate is creating for our company," Bastian said in a memo to employees. Delta is self-insured and sets premiums for its plans, which are administered by UnitedHealthcare. Bastian said that 75% of Delta employees are vaccinated, up from 72% in mid-July. He said the aggressiveness of

the leading strain of the virus "means we need to get many more of our people vaccinated, and as close to 100% as possible."

"I know some of you may be taking a wait-and-see approach or waiting for full (Food and Drug Administration) approval," he told employees. "With this week's announcement that the FDA has granted full approval for the Pfizer vaccine, the time for you to get vaccinated is now." A growing number of companies including Chevron Corp. and drugstore chain CVS announced they will require workers to get vaccinated after Monday's FDA decision.

United and Delta already require new hires to be vaccinated. Two smaller carriers, Hawaiian and Frontier, have said they

will require either vaccination or regular testing for current employees. Other major U.S. airlines, including American and Southwest, said Wednesday that they are encouraging employees to get vaccinated but have not required it.

Delta's requirement for weekly testing of unvaccinated employees will start Sept. 12, and the requirement that the unvaccinated wear masks indoors takes effect immediately. Fueled by the now-dominant delta variant of the virus, new reported cases of COVID-19 in the U.S. have topped 150,000 a day, the highest level since late January. Nationally the rate of increase has slowed, but the variant threatens to overwhelm emergency rooms in parts of the country. □



People sit under Delta sign at Salt Lake City International Airport on July 1, 2021, in Salt Lake City.

Associated Press



# CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

## ACROSS

- 1 Part of A.D.
- 5 Not live
- 10 Spring
- 11 Phone feature
- 12 Move slowly
- 13 Voiced a view
- 14 Resist change
- 16 Softie
- 20 Pixie
- 23 Vein yield
- 24 Clergy's counterpart
- 25 Stares stupidly
- 27 Trickery
- 28 Most adorable
- 29 Military bigwig
- 32 Table protector
- 36 Lowly despot
- 39 Niger neighbor
- 40 Looks forward to
- 41 Scheme
- 42 Come together
- 43 Circus setting

## DOWN

- 1 Pub quaffs
- 2 Dapper
- 3 Curiosity org.
- 4 Mine, of a sort
- 5 Spanish snacks
- 6 Friendship
- 7 Stock holder
- 8 Before, to
- 9 Pop bards
- 11 Small grove
- 15 Obligation
- 17 Get by
- 18 God of war
- 19 Final, for one

FROM	BEAT
REPEL	PERTH
OPERA	IDAHO
NON PRESSES	
DRESSES	ENE
TREES	ASS
ASTOR	
MOM	ONTAP
SAD	TRESSES
CRESSES	HEW
ATSEA	ELOPE
RISER	CARED
SNAP	WERE

Yesterday's answer

- 20 Thick slice
- 21 Katherine unit
- 30 Parsley
- 31 Roofing material
- 33 Like bulls
- 34 Arkin of "Argo"
- 35 Shade
- 36 Texas's
- 37 Really
- 38 Pitch's kin

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10				11				
12				13				
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36	37	38					39	
40							41	
42							43	

8-26

AXYDLBAAXR  
is LONGFELLOW

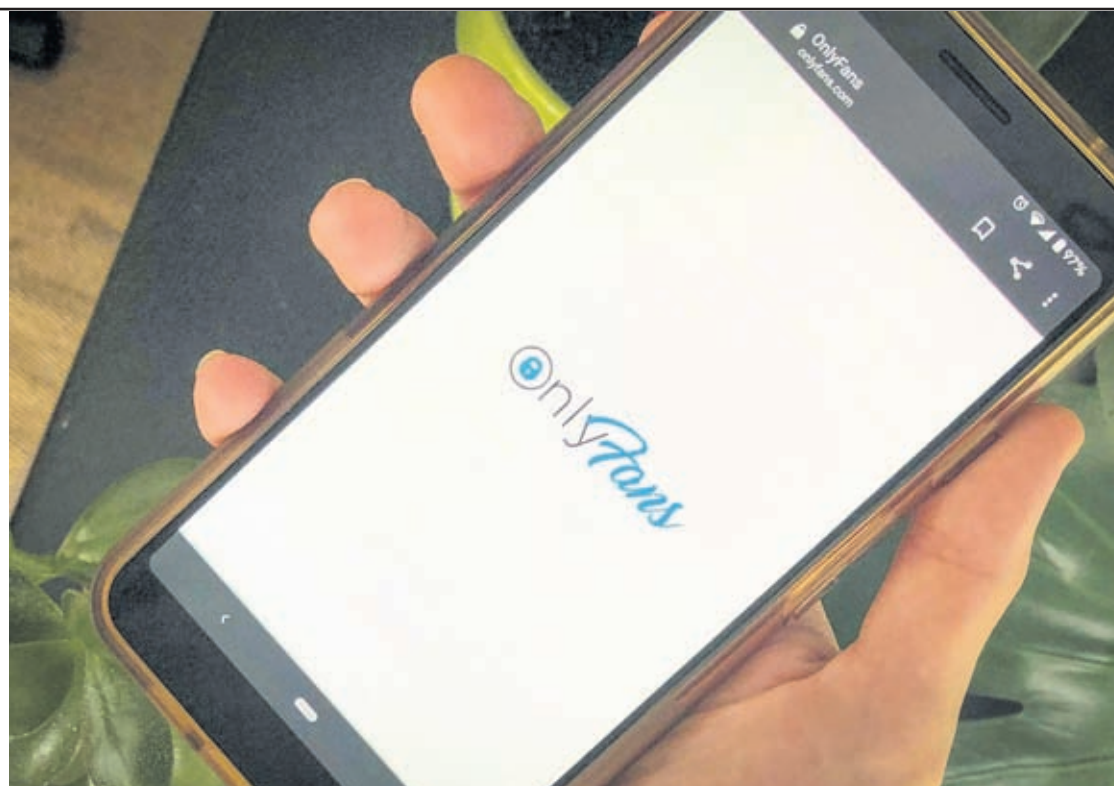
One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

8-26

## CRYPTOQUOTE

UMZUKWLK PMR OYA UK AFK  
ZYMV AY GYZNV JKMWK. ULA  
TA'C M CAMZA. — MOAFYOR  
UYLZVMTO

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: NO MATTER WHO YOU MEET IN LIFE, YOU TAKE SOMETHING FROM THEM. POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE. — GARY ALLAN



This photo shows a phone app for OnlyFans, a site where fans pay creators for their photos and videos, Thursday Aug. 19, 2021.

Associated Press

## OnlyFans reverses explicit content ban after outcry

By TALI ARBEL and BARBARA ORTUTAY

### AP Technology Writers

OnlyFans says it has suspended a plan to ban sexually explicit content following an outcry from its creators and advocates for sex workers.

The subscription site said in a prepared statement Wednesday that the planned ban was "no longer required due to banking partners' assurances that OnlyFans can support all genres of creators" and declined to answer further questions.

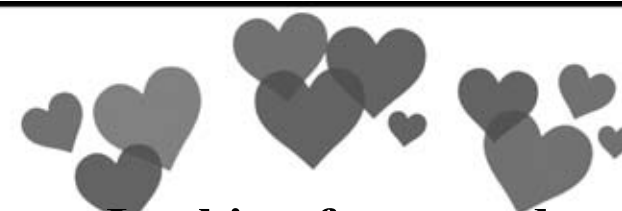
OnlyFans had said last Thursday that it would ban explicit content starting Oct. 1, blaming policies of banks and payment processors for the policy change. "The new rules are necessary to comply with the requirements of these financial institutions and are the only way to help ensure the long-term sustainability of OnlyFans," the company said in a message to users last week. OnlyFans has become famous as a place where sex workers can get paid in a safer way as well as a space for celebrities to interact with fans.

Last week's abrupt change upset the site's creators, many of whom threatened

to move to another website. A lot of sex workers joined OnlyFans during the pandemic when in-person venues shut down or became more dangerous because of COVID-19. The site has been tremendously lucrative for some people, allowing them to earn thousands every month. OnlyFans says it has 130 million users and 2 million creators who have collectively earned \$5 billion. Lacy Lennon, who says she makes tens of thousands of dollars a month from OnlyFans charging \$100 a

minute for custom videos, remains skeptical on the ban reversal. "What's scary is what's the safety on this? How do we know it won't happen again?"

There are other sites where people can pay for porn, and a crop of new ones started trying to lure upset OnlyFans creators. Rapper Tyga was promoting his plans for a new platform called myystar in media interviews after OnlyFans announced their ban, saying, "We're not putting a limit to any content that you do." □



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## Study: Climate change makes European flooding more likely

By **FRANK JORDANS**  
**Associated Press**  
**BERLIN (AP)** — Scientists say that global warming makes the kind of extreme rainfall that caused deadly

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flash flooding in western Europe last month more likely, though it remains unclear exactly how much. At least 220 people died in Germany and Belgium on July 14-15 when swollen streams turned into raging rivers, sweeping away houses, roads and bridges, and causing billions of euros (dollars) in damage. A study released Tuesday by the World Weather Attribution group used historical records and computer simulations to examine how temperatures affected rainfall from the late 19th century to the present. While the study hasn't been assessed by independent scientists yet, its authors use widely accepted methods to conduct rapid assessments of specific weather events such as floods, droughts and heat waves. □



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# Review: Sleek modern horror ‘Candyman’ has got quite a hook

By **MARK KENNEDY**

**AP Entertainment Writer**

There's an urban legend that says if you repeat the name "Candyman" aloud five times in front of a mirror, you summon a hook-handed killer. After seeing Nia DaCosta's film of the same name, you'll never be tempted to do that. You might even not want anything sweet again. Heck, cancel Halloween.

Equal parts cerebral, political and gross-out, "Candyman" is a worthy addition to the library of top-notch social thrillers being built by Jordan Peele and it marks a stunning step forward for director DaCosta, who had just one indie under her belt, the well-received crime drama "Little Woods."

"Candyman" — uh, oh, how many times has his name been typed by now? — is an unusual horror movie set in the luxury lofts and haughty art world of Chicago. It's here that co-writers DaCosta, Peele and Win Rosenfeld can look at gentrification, police brutality, authenticity, myth and Black identity.

It stars Yahya Abdul-Mateen II as Anthony, a visual artist struggling to live up to his billing as "the great Black hope of the Chicago arts scene of tomorrow." He and his girlfriend, gallery owner Brianna (a wonderful Teyonah Parris) live a life of wealth and privilege,



This image released by Universal Pictures shows Yahya Abdul-Mateen II in a scene from "Candyman," directed by Nia DaCosta.

sipping Moscato in their gleaming duplex.

Prodded to create more gritty work, Anthony finds an odd kind of muse in the Candyman, who it is said roamed Chicago's notoriously dangerous Cabrini-Green housing projects making poorly behaving children scared straight.

The myth goes that the Candyman was a Black artist who fell in love with a white woman he was hired to paint. Her prejudiced father hired hooligans to cut off his hand and smear his body with honey so he would be stung to death by bees. Then they burned

him.

The tale is told to Anthony by a Cabrini-Green laundromat owner (Colman Domingo, superb) and yet in this telling the Boogeyman isn't a vengeful demon meant to keep kids in line, but a victim. Candyman is actually an innocent scapegoat, a way to process a system of white oppression.

Peele has described this new riff as a "spiritual sequel" to the original 1992 "Candyman," which was written and directed by Bernard Rose. In some nice touches, Virginia Madsen and Tony Todd, who were

stars of the first film, have roles here, and Vanessa A. Williams appears in both films as the same character, Anne-Marie McCoy, Anthony's mom.

The filmmakers use fabulous paper puppets to tell aspects of the past and have a recurring motif of bees and mirrors. "Candyman" gets progressively more filthy as it unspools, going from gleaming granite countertops in elegantly lit and airy kitchens to grimy, muddy abandoned and graffiti-scarred projects. There are more than a few stunning scenes, including the camera steadily

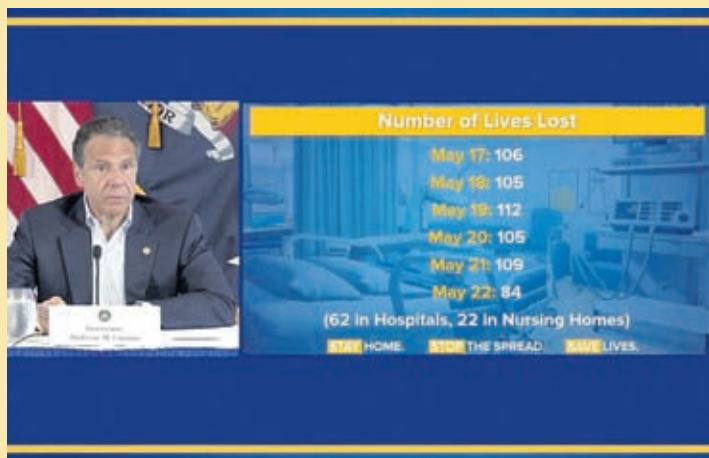
pulling away from a well-appointed apartment at night while the woman in it grapples with the Candyman, and one in a girls' bathroom that is terrifying for the fragments that it doesn't show.

DaCosta can make a stroll down a well-lit, modern and clean hallway somehow creepy. This is confident, smart filmmaking. There's a stunning scene in which the Candyman mirrors his prey's movements and one in an elevator where blood droplets create their own horror-inside-horror.

Anthony's newly unlocked passion to use the Candyman as fuel for his paintings — "I feel really connected to this. I've never been this clear before," he says to his girlfriend — sends him spinning into madness and into his own past, unlocking secrets and fate.

There are parts of the plot that seem undeveloped or vestigial, like the girlfriend's personal history handling artists on the edge — but "Candyman" — oh, no, that's too many times, he'll be here soon — is a jolt of macabre adrenaline. Hopefully, it'll get a lot of buzz. "Candyman," a Universal Pictures release on Friday, is rated R for bloody horror violence, and language including some sexual references. Running time: 91 minutes. Three and a half stars out of four. □

**Associated Press**



In this May 23, 2020 image taken from video provided by the Office of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, Gov. Cuomo updates the public on New York's coronavirus response.

**Associated Press**

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Hours after leaving office, scandal-tainted former New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo suffered another defeat

Tuesday, losing the special Emmy Award he received last year for his daily, televised briefings on the coronavirus pandemic.

## TV Academy revokes Cuomo's Emmy amid scandal, resignation

The International Academy of Television Arts & Sciences said in a statement that given Cuomo's resignation amid a torrent of sexual harassment allegations it was taking away the prize and removing any reference to him in its official materials.

Cuomo left office at 12 a.m. Tuesday, two weeks after he announced he would resign rather than face an impeachment battle that seemed inevitable after a report by independent investigators

— overseen by state Attorney General Letitia James — concluded he had sexually harassed 11 women. The report marked a stunning downfall for Cuomo, whose leadership during the COVID-19 crisis drew widespread praise and accolades, including from the television academy, and led to a book deal for him worth at least \$5 million.

The International Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, whose members include media and en-

tertainment figures from over 60 countries and 500 companies, presented its Founders Award to Cuomo during a live-streamed ceremony in November. In 2017, the academy reversed its decision to give the Founders Award to actor Kevin Spacey after he was accused of sexual misconduct. Other recipients of the award over the years have included former Vice President Al Gore, TV icon Oprah Winfrey, and director Steven Spielberg. □



# Friendliest rivals: MLS, Liga MX meet in All-Star Game in LA

By **GREG BEACHAM**

AP Sports Writer

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — Major League Soccer and Liga MX both realize they're more powerful as partners than rivals.

Although many of their best players will face each other Wednesday night in downtown Los Angeles at the MLS All-Star Game, North America's top two leagues are also friends and business partners. They could soon become full teammates if the continent's football powers can figure out a way to make it happen.

This All-Star week is another step in the lengthy process of aligning Mexico's top pro teams with their American and Canadian counterparts to present a united — and lucrative — continental front to the soccer globe. The partnership already includes two cup competitions, and both leagues' leaders have acknowledged it could eventually lead to a full merger. The players representing those teams at Los Angeles FC's Banc of California Stadium are more interested in providing a memorable game for fans in this vibrant, soccer-loving American city where nearly half of the population is Latino, most with proud Mexican roots.

"As players, you want to be part of history," said Seattle Sounders midfielder Cristian Roldan, a suburban Los Angeles native and the captain of the MLS All-Stars. "That's something we all cherish. This is a really great event for that reason." The border-crossing nature of this event was personified by MLS' two biggest Mexican stars: the LA Galaxy's Javier "Chicharito" Hernández and LAFC's Carlos Vela, who both started out as Chivas prospects and played in Europe before moving stateside to bolster MLS' fortunes.

But after the event was promoted for weeks with advertisements and billboards prominently featuring their faces, both star forwards' teams announced Monday they will

miss the All-Star Game due to injuries.

The absence of Chicharito and Vela is a blow to coach Bob Bradley's MLS squad, but players from both leagues believe MLS' quality of play has risen in recent years to a level close to Liga MX, which has traditionally been the stronger competitive league while struggling with more financial fragility.

"There's not much difference between the leagues anymore," said Columbus' Lucas Zelarayan, who moved north from Tigres UANL before last season and immediately led the Crew to the MLS Cup title. "Both countries have grown a lot in recent years. ... MLS has caught up."

Zelarayan is just one of

many players who have moved between the leagues in recent years, and most of them have echoed Zelarayan's beliefs — even if Mexican teams are still largely dominant in tournament play.

While a full merger isn't imminent, rumors abound of more opportunities for inter-league team competition — and this All-Star setup is another incremental step. MLS had pitted its All-Stars against a well-known European club team every year since 2004.

While MLS craves Liga MX's massive crowds and exposure to the Mexican association's larger overall fan base across Latin America, Liga MX would benefit financially from the overall broadcast rights possibilities



Columbus Crew's Lucas Zelarayan, center, steals the ball from Seattle Sounders' Nicolas Benezet, left, during the second half of an MLS soccer match Saturday, Aug. 21, 2021, in Columbus, Ohio.

Associated Press

and the increased exposure in wealthy North America. One probable clash was addressed last year by Liga MX when it suspended promotion and relegation

for at least five years: MLS is a closed league, which boosts its franchises' value and justifies MLS' extraordinary expansion fees, among other benefits. □

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# Ryder Cup team filled with uncertainty a month out

By **DOUG FERGUSON**

AP Golf Writer

**JERSEY CITY, N.J. (AP) —**

The message Steve Stricker wanted to impart when he took the job as Ryder Cup captain was for the American team to move forward. There has been no shortage of speed bumps along the way.

Consider the most recent developments in a two-hour window Monday involving two players not even in the same place.

Tony Finau, a big presence and beloved figure, finally got the win he desperately needed at The Northern Trust with a 30 on the back nine at Liberty National that led to a playoff victory. That moved him to No. 6 in the Ryder Cup standings and all but secured his spot on the team.

About the time Finau was making his charge, Patrick Reed delivered an update from his home in Houston that had him moving in the opposite direction.

Reed, who pulled out of The Northern Trust with an ankle injury that he thought would heal with another week of rest, disclosed he had been in the hospital with bilateral pneumonia.

"I'm on the road to recovery, once I'm cleared from the doctors—I look forward to returning," Reed said in a statement. "I wish you all



**Tony Finau celebrates after winning The Northern Trust golf tournament at Liberty National Golf Course Monday, Aug. 23, 2021, in Jersey City, N.J.**

Associated Press

the best and I can't wait to get back out there!" Except that he might have to wait a while.

Reed had to withdraw from this week's BMW Championship, the second of three FedEx Cup playoff events where points are quadrupled in value. He started the postseason at No. 22. Not playing last week dropped him to No. 26.

And with a 69-man field and no cut at Caves Valley outside Baltimore, odds are against him staying among the top 30 who advance to the Tour Championship.

The BMW Championship is the final week for Americans to earn one of six automatic spots on the Ryder Cup team, and this is one area of minimal drama.

Collin Morikawa, Dustin Johnson, Bryson DeChambeau, Brooks Koepka and Justin Thomas all have mathematically clinched their spots.

Finau is holding down the last spot, though Stricker has six captain's picks and Finau most certainly would receive one of them if he gets passed by Xander Schauffele, Jordan Spieth

or Harris English.

Reed is at No. 10 and needs a captain's pick.

Does he get one?

Oddly enough, Reed was the first player Stricker called when he was about to be announced as the captain in late February 2019.

The circumstances were different. The Americans were coming off another loss to Europe, and Reed looked bad by complaining to The New York Times that Spieth was the reason they didn't play together, captain Jim Furyk was not smart to have

Reed on the bench for two matches and Europe was better at putting team ahead of ego.

Stricker just wanted to be sure Reed was all in, and Reed assured him he was.

Moving forward.

Never mind the grief (and penalty) Reed brought on himself for swiping away sand before hitting a shot in the Bahamas in December 2019, a violation that followed him Down Under to the Presidents Cup and led to his caddie, brother-in-law Kessler Karain, getting suspended for shoving a fan at Royal Melbourne.

Reed has one of the best short games in golf. He's among the fiercest in match play. If the Americans want their best players, it's hard to leave him out.

But then there's that small matter of form.

Reed won at Torrey Pines in late January and hasn't had a serious chance to win since then. His last top-10 finish was three months ago at the Memorial, where a good final round allowed him to tie for fifth, five shots out of the playoff. If he does get a pick, he will have gone five weeks without competition heading into the Ryder Cup, unless he plays the week before the Sept. 24-26 matches at Whistling Straits. □



**Serena Williams of the US plays Aliaksandra Sasnovich of Belarus for the women's singles first round match on day two of the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London, Tuesday June 29, 2021.**

Associated Press

By **HOWARD FENDRICH**

AP Tennis Writer

Serena Williams added herself to the list of big-name withdrawals from the U.S. Open on Wednesday, pulling out of the year's last Grand Slam

tournament because of a torn hamstring.

Williams hasn't competed since injuring her right leg in the first set of her first-round match at Wimbledon in late June.

The American, who turns

## Serena Williams pulls out of U.S. Open, citing torn hamstring

40 next month, announced her decision to sit out the U.S. Open via a social media post.

She joins Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal in sitting out the competition in Flushing Meadows, where play begins next Monday, raising questions about what the future of tennis might look like without them. The draw for the tournament is Thursday.

This will be the first major tournament since 1997 without any of Williams, Federer or Nadal in the singles brackets. Williams made her Grand Slam de-

but at the 1998 Australian Open; Federer made his the following year; Nadal in 2003.

Federer, Nadal and Novak Djokovic share the men's record of 20.

"After careful consideration and following the advice of my doctors and medical team, I have decided to withdraw from the US Open to allow my body to heal completely from a torn hamstring," Williams wrote in Wednesday's post.

Her note ended with: "I'll see you soon."

Williams' coach, Patrick

Mouratoglou, also put up a post on social media, saying, "we've done everything we could" and adding: "It is heartbreaking, but this is the only possible decision."

Williams has won six singles championships at the U.S. Open, most recently in 2014. In her five appearances at the hard-court tournament in New York since then, she has made it to the final twice — losing to Naomi Osaka in 2018 and Bianca Andreescu in 2019 — and the semifinals three other times, including last year. □